Golden Sands.

Illustrated

"Let us sow good thoughts;
We shall reap good actions."

Christmas 1912 from Sisters of H. Family

Miss Nellie Powers

C.E. WENTWORTH

GOLDEN SANDS

A COLLECTION

OF

LITTLE COUNSELS

FOR THE

SANCTIFICATION AND HAPPINESS OF DAILY LIFE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. E. WENTWORTH

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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GOLDEN SANDS.

In the summer, in the south of France, little children and the infirm poor, incapable of hard labor, in order to earn a little bread, occupy themselves in collecting from the beds of half-dried rivers *golden sands* which are carried by the water in its course and glisten in the sun.

What these poor and little ones do with the *golden sands* which God has scattered in these unknown rivers, let us attempt, with these little *counsels* which God has scattered everywhere to sparkle, and glisten, and comfort for an instant, then to disappear, leaving to the soul the regret of not having gathered them.

Who has not sometimes felt the strength of some sweet and simple *lesson* which thrilled him, and revealed to him suddenly a world of peace, of devotion, and of joy?

It was a *word* read in a book, a *remark* heard by accident in conversation, but which for us had a particular meaning, and left us with an unknown strength. It was a *smile* surprised on the lips of

one whom we loved, and yet knew to be suffering, which told us of the joy of resignation. It was the *frank look* of an innocent child which revealed to us all the sweetness and gentleness of simplicity.

Oh! if we knew how to gather and fix in our souls these lessons which gleam for *an instant* like a luminous ray, how useful they would be to us in days of discouragement and sorrow!

What wise counsels we would find in them for our conduct!

What consolation for our aching hearts!

What ingenious means of doing good!

It is this simple work of *collecting* a little everywhere, from *nature*, from *books*, from *souls* particularly, that one of your brothers proposes to do for you, dear friends, who desire to lead holy and devout lives.

And as these little *sands of gold* which are singly gathered from the bed of the stream bring, when collected, a little comfort to homes of the poor, so he wishes to bring a little joy to your heart and a little peace to your souls.

HAPPINESS.

Is it not a good omen—this word placed on the first page? Does it not mean that our book wishes to be a messenger of happiness?

Messenger of happiness! What a beautiful title! *To show* where happiness is to be found, to *gather* and diffuse it—what a sweet and gentle mission!

First of all, then, we wish to tell *where happiness is.* Do not suppose it such a difficult task.

Happiness radiates from all that atmosphere which surrounds our souls, and which we call *family, employment—position in the order of Providence*—just as through the atmosphere which surrounds the body is diffused the light which gladdens and nourishes.

The atmosphere of the soul is full of *joys*, as heaven is full of *stars.*

The *stars* of the soul are called *duties.* Wherever there is a *duty* there also may a *joy* be found.

To accomplish a duty is to diffuse a *joy*; and as every moment of life holds a duty, it depends upon us to surround ourselves with unceasing joys.

How beautiful, then, is life, with its uninterrupted *duties*, its uninterrupted joys, and after a series of days, more or less extended, heaven forever!

When I study life in detail, I see that each moment brings—

A little work to do.

A little occasion of manifesting affection and kindness.

A little occasion of being devoted.

A little patience and forbearance to practise.

A little occasion for a short prayer.

A little struggle to sustain.

All these are duties imposed by God; and each time I perform them, with the intention, more or less general, of submitting to the will of God, I feel a glow of happiness, and life becomes an uninterrupted series of new joys.

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The little girl gayly sets herself to work; but, look—she scarcely glances at the page marked for her, and her fingers rapidly turn over the pages of the whole book; then she closes it, looks at the open copy-book before her, smilingly reads the copy, and begins her writing with an industry which is delightful to witness.

But, look once more—the writing is cast disdainfully aside, and the little one resumes her book, murmuring, with a yawn, How tiresome this is!

She rises and goes to the window; she listens to a bird singing; she follows with her eyes a workman who is going across the fields; then she quickly turns to pursue a butterfly which has come in through the window and is tremblingly fluttering about her work-table.

But thou giddy, fickle little one, dost thou not see

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ALBURN

that the hour is nearly gone, and thy task on the table will be still there to-morrow?

Remain, remain, then, where thy mother placed thee; begin, continue, and quietly complete the task thy mother assigned thee.

If, at ten years of age, thou canst not courageously conquer disgust, lassitude, and weariness; if thou canst not conquer thyself to learn the easy page before thee, how painful will be thy future life! It will be a useless life: a life without order, a life without result, a life without peace!

Little one, be less fickle; fix only for a few moments, fix thy mind and gently command its attention to the end of that line; then another and, little by little, the task will be accomplished, and thy mother will be pleased.

Nothing, my child—nothing good is ever effected without *perseverance.*

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"The heart must be strong to accomplish its mission, and habitual *serenity* alone can give it that strength. The *dew* of the eyes, called tears, is not refreshing; it is withering.

"My child! remain not a *dreamer:* labor, pray devote thyself!

"And then beware of harboring in the depth of thy soul, or thy heart, what is called a *secret.* A

secret, at thy age, is a gnawing and destroying worm.

"The secrets of thy heart confide to thy mother.

"The secrets of thy soul, thou knowest to whom thou must confide them."

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A gracious word, opportunely uttered, is no *trifle* in the matter of happiness; nor a kindly smile added to a suggestion, a slight uneasiness spared another, nor even an extra act of politeness.

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Joy in life is like the oil in the lamp.

When the oil commences to fail, the wick burns with a glimmering red flame, filling the air about it with a black smoke.

Life, also, without a little joy, burns unprofitably, filling the air about it with depression and sadness.

If every morning, by a resigned and simple prayer—by that quarter of an hour of meditation which only seems difficult when we do not practise it,—we would open our hearts to God, as we open a window to the air and sun, God would put there for the day that sweet, calm joy which elevates the soul, causes it to feel less the weight of sorrow, and makes it experience the desire to overflow in kindness.

We are never *so good* as when we possess a joyful heart.

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But joy is not mirth, neither is it clever speeches nor repartees ; . . . it is *habitual serenity*.

These words well express a great deal.

A serene atmosphere leaves the sky always visible ; it is lighter, and seems to *lift from the earth* the bodies that breathe it.

A serene sky is always pure. . . . Clouds may pass over its deep azure, but they mar it not.

It is thus with the heart that opens in the morning to the joy of God.

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" You are never in ill-humor," was remarked to a woman who was known to be sorely tried at home ; " is it that you do not feel the injustice of mankind nor the annoyance of things ? "

" I feel them as you do," she replied, " but they do not wound me."

" You have, then, a special balm ? "

" Yes, for the annoyance of persons I have *affection* ; for those of things I have *prayer* ; and over each *smarting wound* I pronounce these words : ' God wills it.' "

* *
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Indulgence is more than *kindness*. It presupposes it without doubt, but it adds to this virtue a great strength of character, a powerful affection, and habitual innocence; indulgence is the offspring of a pure soul.

Persons of no heart do not understand indulgence.

Those of little intelligence believe indulgence culpable.

Those who are at peace with their conscience are often led to an excessive rigor. To overlook nothing in others is often a proof that we overlook a great deal in ourselves.

Indulgence is more than *pardoning;* it is *excusing;* it is seeking a favorable interpretation for every thing; it is, above all, never showing that a word or action has wounded us.

Indulgence is saying of the person who has wounded us: "She did not think, otherwise she would not have done it; she did not mean to give me pain, she loves me too much; she could not do differently, and perhaps she is suffering from the thought of having displeased me." There is no more efficacious balm for the wounds of the heart than the *excuses* we frame for those who have offended us.

To be indulgent is to forget every evening the contradictions which we have borne each day, and to

say to ourselves each morning: "To-day I will be stronger and more calm than yesterday."

Indulgence goes so far as to make us accuse ourselves inwardly of not being sufficiently kind, affable, charitable.

To be indulgent is not only to accept the excuses which are made us, but to be beforehand with those who timidly seek us to ask pardon.

Then we must never punish?

Yes, . . . *by loving still more!*

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"Thou wilt never believe me wicked," said a young man to his sister, whom he frequently pained by his misconduct, and who always excused him.

"*No*," she replied, "not as long as *you love me*. . . . Would you always give me pain?"

Nothing preserves affection in the heart like the indulgence with which we surround it, and, when affection lasts, it ends by rendering the heart good.

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What is necessary to make one *forbearing?* A great deal of *good sense* with a *little piety*.

How many persons would dare each evening to say simply to God: *My God, treat me to-morrow as I have to-day treated such a person whom I have rudely repulsed, whose faults I have brought to light through*

malice or to parade my wit; as I have treated another to whom, through pride, through aversion, through contempt, I have refused to speak, whom I have avoided, whom I cannot like because she displeased me, whom I cannot pardon, and with whom I do not wish to exchange any civility.

And yet do not forget that, sooner or later, God will do unto you as you do unto others.

No position is subject to more petty annoyances than that of the mother of a family or the mistress of a house. It often happens that she is interrupted ten times in writing a letter or arranging an account. What a habit of holiness, what an empire over self, must not one possess in order to show no impatience and to meet these *trifling* contradictions with equable serenity!

To discontinue one's work without any apparent trouble, to reply smilingly, to wait patiently the end of a long conversation, to resume calmly the interrupted work—this is the mark of a soul which possesses itself and which God possesses.

Oh! how much good these souls effect about them, but how rare they are!

MY CROSS OF TO-DAY.

If I have not a cross, I will make no progress toward heaven. A cross—that is to say, *all that disturbs us*—is the *sting* which stimulates us, and

without which we would remain stationary, receiving all the dust of the road, and perhaps sinking by degrees into evil.

A cross is the *spring* which pushes us forward in spite of our apathy and resistance.

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WHAT IS MY CROSS OF TO-DAY?

It is a person whom Providence has placed near me, and whom I *dislike;* who *humiliates* me constantly by her disdainful manner; who *wearies* me by her slowness in the work which I share with her; who *excites my jealousy* because she is loved more than I and because she succeeds better than I; who *irritates* me by her chatter, her frivolity, or even by her attentions to me.

It is a person who, for some vague reason, I believe to be *inimical* to me; who, according to my excited imagination, *watches* me, *criticises* me, *ridicules* me.

She is there, always there. . . . My efforts to avoid her are of no avail.

A mysterious power seems to multiply these appearances before me. . . .

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This is my most painful cross; the others are very small compared to this.

Circumstances change, *temptations* diminish, *positions* improve, *misfortune* becomes endurable by habit, but persons who are *disagreeable* to us always irritate us more and more.

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HOW I MUST BEAR MY CROSS OF TO-DAY.

By not showing in any way the weariness, the dislike, or the involuntary repulsion which her presence causes me. By obliging myself to render her some service ; it matters little whether she knows it—it is a secret between God and me.

To frequently say *something good* of her talents, of her virtues, her tact. . . . I will, certainly, find something to praise.

To pray seriously for her, and even to go so far as to ask God to love her and leave her with me.

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"I was so happy," wrote a woman, "that I felt myself growing better."

Is there not here a secret for making people *good* by *making them happy?*

It is said that there is nothing which diffuses itself more quickly in a family than the "coolness, indifference, and discontent" which manifest themselves in the countenance of one of its members. . . .

This thought is not absolutely true. There are some things which communicate themselves with as much rapidity and more force; they are a "bright smile, a frank and open manner, a cheerful face, a happy heart."

THE LESSONS OF A DAISY.

I saw her from a distance, poor child! She appeared to be leaning pensively against the window, and holding in her hand a *daisy*, while she questioningly and slowly despoiled it of its petals.

What she wished to learn, I do not know; I only heard her pale lips murmur these words, *A little, a great deal, passionately, not at all*, as each petal fell whirling to the ground at her feet.

I watched her at a distance, and felt touched. Poor child! why do you confide the troubles of your soul to a flower? Have you no mother?

Why are you anxious about your future? Have you not the good God, who prepares it for you with the same care that your mother, eighteen years ago, prepared your cradle?

And when the petals of the daisy were nearly gone, as the child's fingers rested on the last, and her lips reluctantly murmured, *A little!*—an answer which Providence permitted—she let her arms fall discouraged by her side, and the poor child wept.

Why do you weep, my child? Does not this answer please you?

Let me—let me, in the name of the gracious daisy which you have just destroyed, give you a lesson from my vast experience.

Was *a great deal* the answer you desired?

"*A great deal*" *of wit!* It often makes us wicked, cruel, and unjust; it causes tormenting jealousies, deceptions which spoil our triumphs, and a pride which is never satisfied.

"*A great deal*" *of heart!* It often brings anxious troubles, weary suffering, bitter sorrows, . . . and sometimes leads to contempt of duty.

"*A great deal*" *of attraction!* It produces wearing vanity, overwhelming deception, an insatiable desire to please, a restless fear of being depreciated, and often a neglect of domestic duties.

"*A great deal*" *of fortune!* It often produces a wearing satiety, banishes calm and peaceful joys, deprives us of friendship, and makes us slaves to flattery.

No, no, my child; do not desire *a great deal* of any thing in this life, except, perhaps, of *forbearance and kindness.*

And if the good God has submitted you to the trial of "*a great deal*," oh! pray to Him that it may not be your perdition!

Was "*passionately*" the answer you desired?

Passionately! Oh! what harm this word does! There is something to make one tremble in the thought which it awakens.

Passion is blind impulse, delirium, excess in all things.

For you, my child, I would prefer the answer, "*Not at all*," as applied to fortune, to outward charms, to all that the world calls *success*, *glory*, *loveliness*.

I know well that is a hard answer which is interpreted by *continual privation*, and which exacts hard and incessant labor to supply the necessities and wants of those we love.

But let it not alarm you too much. God never disinherits one of His creatures to the point of letting him want for every thing.

God may deprive a countenance of charms, a character of loveliness, a mind even of brilliant powers, but He never deprives the heart of *all love*, and with the *power of loving* He gives also that of asking, ever promising to hear us.

Now, my child, as long as we can *love* and *pray*, life has charms.

In loving we devote ourselves; and devotion renders one happy, even though it be not appreciated.

There remains, my child, only one more answer from the *daisy*, "*a little*,"—the paternal reply which Providence sent to your childish curiosity.

Accept it and make it the maxim of your life.

A little, that is, a modicum of the goods of fortune, a position which promises the calmest life, destroys anxiety for the future, and, though doubtless exacting daily labor, permits sweet enjoyments from time to time.

A little, that is, moderation in our desires, which leaves the soul happy in the possession of what it has, teaches it to draw therefrom all the profit possible, and to repel those dreams of a more brilliant position, of a more extended reputation, of a more glorious name.

A little, that is, of the heart's affection, regulated by duty, and re-animating that *family* circle around the hearth, which is composed of parents to love, pious friends to gladden, the poor to console, hearts to strengthen, and the sorrowing to comfort.

A *little*, that is, a taste for all that is beautiful —literature, works of art, music, . . . not to the extent of giving us dreams of fame, but affording mental enjoyments all the more keen when our obligation of daily labor renders them more rare.

You see, my child, that "*a little*," the reply which

the daisy made you, may still be a very beautiful portion, and you seemed to disdain it.

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I do not know what worldly entertainments leave in the heart of a young girl ; but I do know that children, the most innocent, the purest, the most *transparent*, after their appearance at these pleasures, have secrets from those who formerly read their hearts.

The mother heretofore entered the heart of her child as she would her own ; it was always open to her. Now she must knock at the door, . . . and when she does attain entrance, she is no longer permitted to *see every thing*, and her visit seems *all too long*.

Oh! what have these worldly reunions put into this heart?

Poor child, poor mother!

From the moment that there exists a secret between these two souls, which should understand each other, the child no longer possesses innocence, and the mother has lost her joy.

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The mind and the heart are like a house in which we take *lodgers*. They may be honest and quiet,

or, on the other hand, noisy and destructive, seeking only to spoil the dwelling which receives them.

Let us beware, then, of the ideas to which we give *hospitality*; let us not pick them up at random in any book or journal which falls into our hands. There are ideas which, once admitted, can be dislodged only with great difficulty.

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We are tempted to say sometimes that there is an *evil spirit* in things, which takes pleasure in spiting us, thwarting our desires, and resisting our will. The more petulant we show ourselves, the more irritating they become; the more we wish to hasten, the more they persist in remaining *hard* and *rebellious*. . . .

Gentleness will cause us to look upon them kindly and touch them delicately; . . . and this regard and this tact will, as it were, restore their *good-nature*.

Who among us has not experienced this?

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Prove yourselves grateful. A *grateful* heart can never be a *wicked* heart.

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"I have read," relates L. Veuillot, "that one day

there came to heaven a little unknown soul, which entered immediately, without having undergone any fatigue, or shed a tear, or suffered a misfortune, or done any thing extraordinary.

"The good God assigned it a very glorious place, and there was a murmur of astonishment in the assembly of the saints.

"All looked toward the Guardian Angel who had brought the little soul. The angel bowed before God and obtained permission to speak to the heavenly court, and from his lips with a sound lighter than the wings of the butterfly, there fell these words, which all heaven heard:

"'This soul has always graciously taken its share of sunshine, of shadow, and of toil, and has never questioned any thing in which there was no offence against God.'"

* * *

To-day is a *furrow* traced before us: our thoughts, our desires, our actions, our intentions, are the *seeds* which every moment, and often unconsciously, we drop into it.

The furrow finished, we begin another, then another; each day a new one opens, and so on to the end of life: . . . and we are always sowing.

And all that we have sown takes root, grows, and brings forth fruit without any further effort on our part. Even if we chance to look backward and behold these fruits, we do not recognize our work.

And behind us the angels and the devils, like reapers, gather in sheaves what belongs to them.

They preserve it, and they will appear at the *last day* and lay it before the *Master.*

Is there not food for reflection in this picture ?

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Joy is never sown upon earth but in a furrow traced by labor or sorrow. You who seek joy, begin to endure and to labor.

Our *calling*, the *calling* of all of us, is that of the *sower*, and we are wanting in the performance of our duty when we permit a soul to pass near us without imparting a good thought or a pious impression.

Nothing is more heart-rending than these words : "I am useless!" Happily, we need never be useless ; a pious word, an act of kindness, a modest demeanor, an affectionate smile, are so many seeds which we can let fall each moment, and which always bear fruit.

Happy those who have many about them ; they are rich proprietors ; they can sow in many fields.

A LITTLE RECIPE FOR THE USE OF PERSONS DESTINED TO LIVE TOGETHER.

I.

"You love each other, do you not?"

"Yes, but—"

"But—what?"

"Oh, *he* has a good, a very good heart, but if you knew what a trying disposition! For three years now I have struggled and prayed and scolded, but alas—"

"Three years! if for three years you had tried my *recipe*, you would no longer feel the asperities of his disposition, you would not even suspect that there were thorns about this affectionate heart."

"Is there, then, a recipe?"

"Yes, and one so simple that I hesitate to give it to you. Instead of *struggling* against your poor friend, *struggle* against yourself; instead of *praying so much* that he may correct what does not depend upon his will to change, *pray* for *yourself* that you may become better; instead of *weeping*, smile, come what may; in a word, diminish the number of your own faults, and *become saintly*.

"A saint, a real saint is patient; and patience is like the woollen garments in which we clothe ourselves in winter, that we may not feel the cold.

Have you ever dreamed of preventing the weather from being cold?

"A saint is *gentle*; and gentleness is the soft bulwark with which sanctity surrounds us to blunt the edge of sharp or unjust words which might rend our hearts.

"To labor for the amendment of others is often difficult and even impossible; to labor upon ourselves is always possible and, I add, *always efficacious.*"

"But is it not difficult *to be a saint?*"

"We have only to let the good God do with us simply as He wills, be a docile instrument in His hands."

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Would you know the name of some *little creatures* so agreeable that even the most wicked persons never think of repulsing them—occupying so little space, and so unimportunate, that they never prevent the perfect accomplishment of duty, but rather make it easier?

They are called *acts of kindness.*

Every heart, even the poorest, if it will remain innocent, can produce them.

They escape from it like bees from a hive—not like them, seeking honey that they may hoard it, but

bearing each one his portion of honey that they may deposit it in another heart.

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A *good* heart is always strong; it suffers, but it hides its tears, and seeks consolation by devoting itself to others.

Is it just to forget all the kindness done us by those with whom we live for a little *pain* which, after all, may have been given unintentionally?

THE ANGEL OF LITTLE SACRIFICES.

II.

Have you never seen her at work?

Have you never at least felt her influence?

In every Christian family and in all pious communities, as the image of His providence in the household, God has placed the *angel of little sacrifices*, trying to remove all the thorns, to lighten all the burdens, to share all the fatigues.

She has for her motto these gracious words of an amiable saint: *Good makes no noise, and noise effects no good.*

Thus she is like a ray of sunlight, lighting, warming, giving life to all, but inconveniencing no one.

We feel that she is with us, because we no longer experience those misunderstandings of heretofore,

those rancorous thoughts, those deliberate coolnesses which spoil family life ; because we no longer hear those sharp, rude words which wound so deeply ; because affectionate sentiments mount readily from the heart to the lips, and life is sweeter.

Who, then, has absorbed that self-love which would not yield ; that egotism which mingled with the most sincere friendship ; that self-indulgence, in fine, which always sought ease ?

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The *angel of little sacrifices* has received from heaven the mission of those angels of whom the prophet speaks, who removed the stones from the road, lest they should bruise the feet of travellers.

And that of the angels who, according to the simple legend of the first Christians, scattered rose-leaves 'neath the feet of Jesus and Mary in their flight into Egypt. . . .

But, like them, she is oftener invisible ; she does her work in secret.

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There is a *place* less commodious than another ; she chooses it, saying with a sweet smile, how comfortable I am here !

There is some work to be done, and she presents herself for it simply with the joyous manner of one who finds her happiness in so doing.

It is an *object* of trifling value, of which she deprives herself to give to her who the evening before has manifested a desire to possess one like it.

How many oversights repaired by this unknown hand!

How many neglected things put in their places, without our seeing how they came there!

How many little joys procured for another without his ever having mentioned to any one the happiness which they would give him!

Who has known thus how to do good in secret? Who has known how to divine the secrets of the heart?

* * *

Does a dispute arise? She knows how to settle it by a pleasant word which wounds no one, and falls upon the slight disturbance like a ray of sunlight upon a cloud.

Should she hear of two hearts estranged, she has always new means of reuniting them without their being able to show her any gratitude, so sweet, simple, and natural is what she does.

But who will tell the thorns which have torn her hands, the pain her heart has endured, the humiliations her charity has borne?

And yet she is always smiling.

Does sacrifice give her joy?

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Have you never seen her at work, the angel of little sacrifices?

On earth she is called a mother, a friend, a sister, a wife.

In heaven she is called a saint.

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Listen to the charming words which a mother overheard on the lips of her children.

They were two, a brother and sister, seated before an open book. The little brother wearily regarded the page which he was to learn by heart, and the sister, a little older, seated at his side with some sewing in her hand, was charged to urge him to his task.

"Come, study, Paul!"

"Oh, do you not see, I can't! . . . But it is not my fault; I can do nothing when I am not in the *humor*."

"Not in the humor! Then you should put yourself in the humor."

"I do not know how."

"Because you wish to work *all alone*."

"How, *all alone?*"

"Yes; *without the good God*. Oh! it is very

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wrong to withdraw the good God from all that we do! It is the way now, it seems; but it is a very bad way. Papa says that nothing, absolutely nothing, either in the family or in the country, should be done without God. We may appear to succeed; but it would be like erecting a column without first putting a large stone to support it; it would fall."

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Let no one misunderstand what we ask. It is neither *flattery nor compliments*, but a few simple words: a "*Thank you*," for example, accompanied by a pressure of the hand or an affectionate glance.

How much pleasure you give me! How much trouble you take for me! I love to have you do anything for me—you do it so heartily and so well! How kind you are!

Any of those thousand heart-felt expressions which we never write and never search for—they escape us impulsively when we are touched and moved.

We have seen workmen whose only object seemed to be money, weep with joy upon hearing one of those expressions uttered in accents of sincerity which could not be doubted.

LITTLE MISERIES.

There is not one of our days in which we do not

every moment wound ourselves with a multitude of little thorns which we cannot avoid.

They do not make deep wounds, but these *slight scratches* repeated every day poison the character, so to speak, destroy our peace, excite a restless humor, and make very hard family life which should be sweet and calm.

These are the little *miseries* which life brings in its course.

Each hour *deposits its own*, as each drop of water which flows over the prairie to make it fruitful and flourishing *deposits* a little slime.

Would you know some of these miseries?

An *impatience* which betrays itself before a person whose esteem we would retain. A *servant* who serves us badly, who irritates us by her slowness, who annoys us by her habitual forgetfulness, who mortifies us before others by her awkwardness.

A *giddy, awkward child* who breaks a valuable object which we prize for its association; an *importunate person* who makes us miss a business appointment; a *carriage* which bespatters a garment we are wearing for the first time; a *workman* who makes us wait the execution of a pressing order which we had counted upon; *time* which delays or prevents something which we have long planned; a *visit* which we cannot refuse, and which takes from

us absolutely necessary time or wearies all our faculties by its insipidity.

Forgetting an important commission that we have been charged with, which will make us appear impolite, or even slightly ungrateful.

The loss of a note or some object actually necessary to us, the importance of which our imagination exaggerates.

The presence of a person that we live with, whose sour, discontented disposition never finds any thing well done.

The eternal repetition of the same stories or complaints which we must submit to with an attentive manner every evening.

The levity of one we love, who does not understand our delicate attentions for her. . . .

When the evening comes, and we have not undergone all these contradictions let us thank God. "All these and many more we can meet every day."

WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THESE LITTLE MISERIES?

Await them. Perhaps it would be an excellent practice each morning at your prayers to read this list, which each one could prolong as it suited him, and then say simply to your soul: "Behold thy part; dost thou accept it willingly? Oh! yes, since the good God sends it to me."

And then, . . . these *same miseries* examined quietly, what are they? Ah! if no others existed. *Prepare for them.* If you wish that even a violent blow should not injure a body upon which it falls, make the *body pliable*; it will yield under the pressure, but it will resume its former shape. Let it be the same with our souls; accustom yourself, says a pious author, to *yield* with a sweet condescension, not only to exigencies (that is a duty), but to the simple desires of those about you and to unforeseen accidents, and you will be rarely disturbed.

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A sure means of overcoming a dislike which we entertain for any one is to *do him a little kindness every day*; and the way to overcome a dislike which another may feel toward us is to *say some little kind word of him every day.*

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"Show me a soul which long retains the remembrance of a trifling favor, which seems never to have paid the debts of its heart, which exaggerates its obligations to others, which estimates them at twenty times their value; . . . in my opinion that soul is infinitely more likely to become a *saint* than if it was raised in ecstasy during prayer."

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If you wish to be loved, to be esteemed, if you wish that your faults should be imperceptible, be not only *kind in actions*, but in *words also—praise sometimes.*

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Amiability is the sunshine of the soul, which causes smiles to bloom on the lips, and expands the heart, as the rays of the sun open the buds of the rose.

Amiability is the kind word which revives, reanimates, consoles, and strengthens, as the dew revives, refreshes, and colors the withering plant.

Amiability is grace of manner, easy deportment, a peaceful countenance, the kindly glance which communicates itself even from one member of the family to all the others, as the perfume of a single flower extends over all the meadow where it blooms.

Amiability is in its nature excessively contagious ; with an amiable person we necessarily become amiable, or we fly from her and hide ourselves.

Amiability is not a virtue apart ; either it supposes all other virtues, or the constant practice of it gradually attracts and preserves them in the amiable soul.

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If you are teaching a piece of work, if you are laboring at the same employment with others, never

ridicule one who is awkward. If he be so from want of intelligence, your ridicule is far from charitable ; if from want of instruction, it is exceedingly unjust. Correct his awkwardness kindly, show him how he should do his work, and God, who sees you and is pleased with your patience, will tell one of His angels to aid you in your moments of difficulty.

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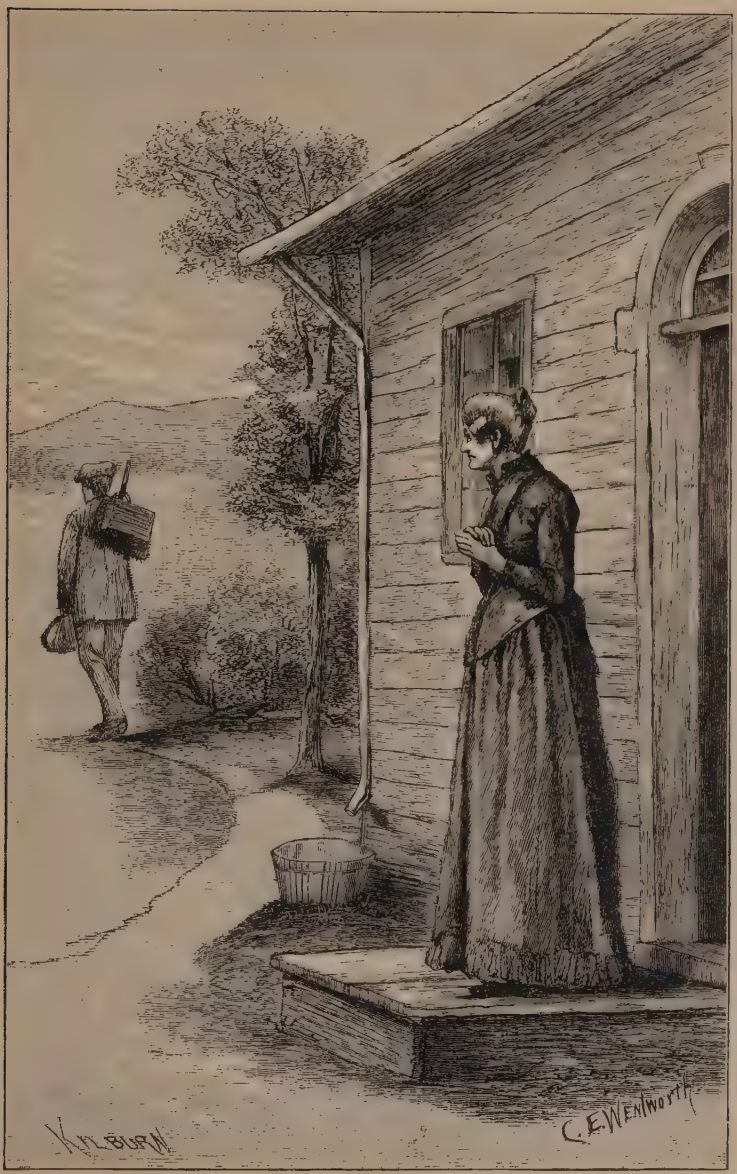
THE COMPANION OF THE JOURNEY.

A virtuous youth of pure and tender heart, of generous soul and energetic will, set out alone on the rude journey of life. He went forth with an aching heart and hidden tears. He pressed his hand on his breast to stop its throbbing, and dared not look back upon the home he was leaving, lest he should be overcome.

In that home dwelt his mother. She had said to him ; " Go, my child, it is necessary. . . . In a few years thou wilt return to thy aged mother, who will await thee in solitude at the fireside of thy infancy, and thou wilt make her last days happy.

" Would I might accompany thee, my child, for it is not well for man to go alone. I cannot. Seek, then, a friend to accompany thee in thy journey.

" Youth is attractive ; many will present themselves ; choose, my child, and may this companion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be for thee the angel which preserved Tobias innocent and brought him back to his aged parents."

"But whom must I choose, mother, and what is the name of the friend you wish for me?"

And the mother, embracing her child for the last time, whispered a name softly in his ear, and added several times: "*Him alone! him alone!* my child."

"I promise, mother."

He set forth alone on the rude journey of life, and as he journeyed there passed before him a luminous apparition, and he heard a voice saying:

"Dost thou wish me for the companion of thy journey?"

"How art thou called?"

"I am *Glory*."

"It is not the name my mother whispered to me; pass on thy way."

And farther on his feet seemed to glide over the green turf, and his weary limbs to forget their fatigue. A voice soft as the breeze of the morning, and sweet as the words of a mother to her child, was heard:

"Dost thou wish me for the companion of thy journey?"

"How art thou called?"

"I am *Affection*."

"It is not the name my mother whispered; pass on thy way."

And going a little farther, a sweet trembling

thrilled through his whole being, and a voice soft as the song of the shepherd in the valley was heard :

"Dost thou wish me for the companion of thy journey?"

"How art thou called?"

"I am *Pleasure*."

"It is not the name my mother whispered; pass on thy way."

And as the evening drew near, and the traveller was more sad than in the morning because of the loneliness of the day, he suddenly experienced a feeling of strength unknown to him, and a tender but strong voice was heard :

"Dost thou wish me for the companion of thy journey?"

"How art thou called?"

"I am *Duty*."

"Oh! come with me, come with me. Thine is the name my mother whispered."

And some years later this youth returned, still pure, tender, and virtuous, with generous soul and energetic will.

And to his mother, who awaited him at her lonely fireside, he brought comfort for her declining years.

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If habit makes *saints*, it also makes *sinners*.

Yes, little by little, we are *saved* or we are *lost*, and, having reached the gate of glory or that of the abyss, we exclaim, "So soon!"

The point of departure is imperceptible; it is the little flake of snow, which, falling to the earth, seemed ready to melt, but, having rolled upon other flakes, has grown to be a threatening mass which is about to crush us.

Oh! if from one sin I try to go back to the desire which provoked the act, to the thought which produced the desire, to the occasion which gave rise to the thought, I would find but a trifle, something almost imperceptible—a word of double meaning which I heard with a smile; a useless explanation which I sought simply through curiosity; an indifferent glance caused, I know not why, though my conscience told me to withhold it; a prayer omitted because it inconvenienced me, and in its place I did something which pleased me; a moment of work which I abandoned to follow some vague image passing through my mind.

Eight days after the same accident is renewed, a little more prolonged—remorse, stifled, becomes extinct. Eight days after— Alas! let us stop here; each one can finish the story for himself. . . . The practical conclusion is easily drawn.

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To have no one to render happy—no aged father to care for, no friend to share one's heart or one's riches, no afflicted to console, no child or ignorant to instruct, no blessing to ask of Heaven for one dearer than ourselves. To have nothing but *self* . . . always *self* . . . the only object of our thoughts, of our efforts, of our labors—how hard, how sad it is!

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Whenever we have to establish new relations with any one, let us make an ample provision "of pardon, of indulgence, of kindness," and "let our aim be to render him happy."

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Purity expands, brightens the soul, and promotes its growth—it is its spring-time.

Vice contracts, saddens, and withers it: it is the winter, or perhaps the breath of the devil who passes.

RECIPES FOR NEVER WEARYING FRIENDS.

This recipe was composed by a person whose life was for a long time tormented, spoiled, poisoned by the minute care and attention lavished upon her by the too ardent affection of a sincerely devoted but indiscreet relative.

There is a medium in all things, even in the manifestation of affection, even in the bestowal of *kind attentions*, even in the removal of *little miseries*.

This recipe has but four very clear and very precise articles. Here they are :

1. *I will always leave my friend still something to desire.* If he begs me to come to see him three times, I will go twice. He will dream at night of my third visit, and will receive me the more cordially on the morrow. It is so pleasant to feel one's self wanted, and very hard to fear one's self importunate!

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2. *I will serve my friend as far as he wishes, but no more.* An officious friendship is always inconvenient, and a prodigality of even the most beautiful sentiments becomes insupportable. Devotion does not consist in doing for one's friend *all that can be done*, but simply in doing *all that may be agreeable or useful to him*, and further we must let him discover for himself, rather than show him what we do. As we all passionately love our liberty we hold to our little *eccentricities ;* we do not like to have that arranged with too much order which we naturally leave a little out of *order ;* we would not even have too much *care* taken of us.

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3. I will *busy myself with my own affairs, and a little with those of my friend, but very little.* This rule will infallibly result usefully. First of all, by busying myself

with my own affairs I will *complete* them, and afford my friend an opportunity to do the same with his, and each will be satisfied. If he call me to his assistance I will go through fire to help him; but if he does not call me I will feel that I am obliging him infinitely and myself as well by not interfering in any way. If, however, I can help him *without his knowledge*, when I perceive that he would not ask me, I shall always do it.

4. *I will allow my friend the liberty to think and act as he pleases in things indifferent.* Why should I force him to think and act with me? Am I a type of the good and beautiful? And is it not absurd to imagine that another thinks and acts ill, the moment he differs from me? Doubtless I shall not always assure him that *he is right*, but I shall generally permit him to believe so.

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Try this recipe, and I assure you you will keep your friends a long time.

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Let us beware in our family life of "prejudice." Many women have the talent unconsciously of setting themselves in the "most headstrong manner" against a member of their family.

And why? They can hardly say, for the cause is

never very definite whence comes all the harm. It is an "air of *indifference*" which they believe they have detected, and which was the result of an anxiety which could not be confided to them. It is a "word" which they have heard or wrongly interpreted, because at the moment they were discontented and disposed to see things in a false light.

It is a "report" to which they should have given no attention, without at least affording to the person it concerned an immediate opportunity to explain.

They become *indifferent* themselves, uncommunicative, suspicious, spying, misinterpreting the least gesture; . . . then after a few days comes a coolness, justified by the thought that they are no longer loved; . . . then follows disdain, then contempt, then a species of hatred which corrodes the heart. . . .

And all this silently grows in the soul, and oh, how hard and bitter it makes family life! They console, or rather justify, themselves by saying: "How I suffer!" never dreaming to add, "What suffering I cause others!" Where does the fault lie? In a want of simplicity and confidence.

LET IT PASS! Oh, how many souls, on the point of being disturbed and troubled, these simple words have left serene and peaceful!

Something has wounded us by its want of delicacy. "Let it pass"; no one will think any more of it.

A bitter or unjust word irritates us. "Let it pass"; he from whom it escaped will be only too happy to see that we have forgotten it.

A painful report is going to separate us from an old friend. "Let it pass," and we will preserve the peace of our souls and holy charity.

A suspicious manner is on the point of affecting our friendship. "Let it pass"; our confiding countenance will win back confidence. . . .

How is it that we are so careful to remove the thorns from our path lest they should wound us, and yet we can take pleasure in gathering and burying in our hearts the thorns that we encounter in the family circle?

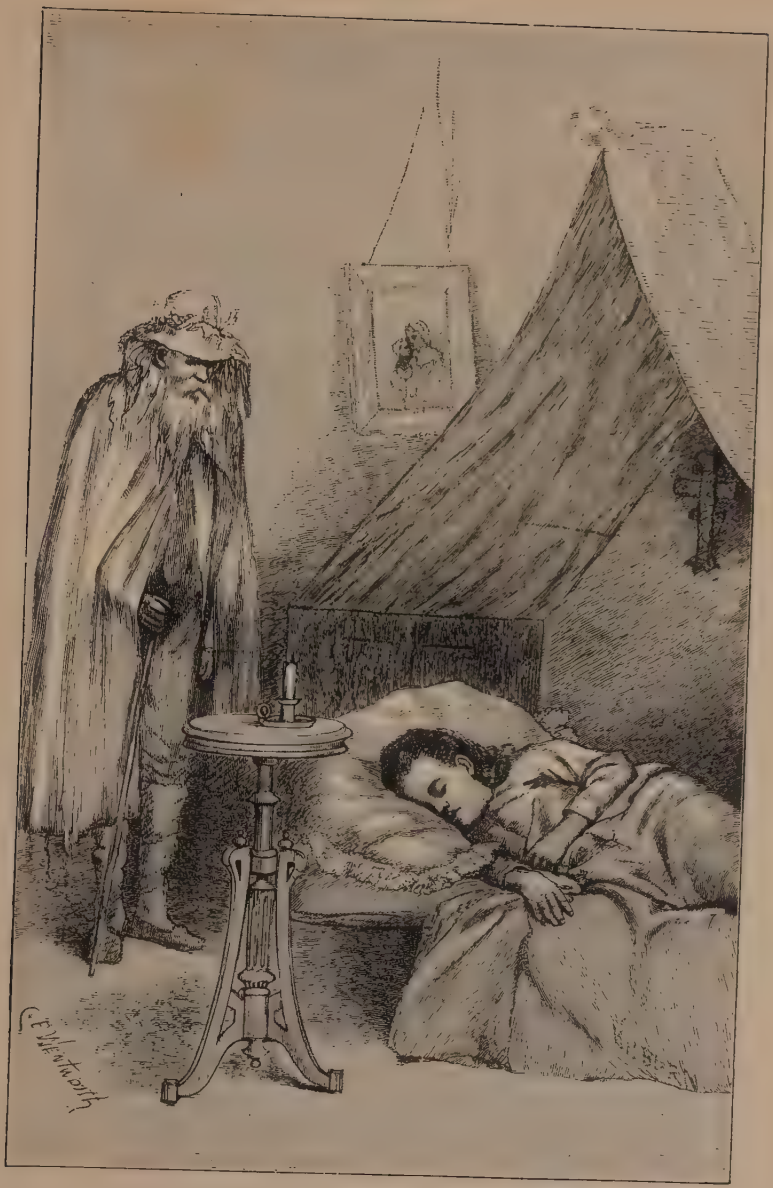
Surely we are very unreasonable.

A SCHOOL-GIRL'S DREAM.

It was very cold; the wind moaned through the leafless trees in the court.

I was warmly *tucked* in bed, and I remember I murmured a prayer as I thought of the many poor little children, less fortunate than I, who were suffering and weeping at this hour.

And I thought I saw advancing an old man, bending under a heavy mantle of snow which enveloped


C. F. Wentworth

him: he had a crown of icicles on his head, and rings of hoar-frost on every finger, and his lips were blue.

As he walked, there fell from his mantle, from his long beard, and from his hands, flakes of snow which accumulated in a white heap around my couch.

"Who are you?" I cried, trembling with cold and terror.

"Do not be alarmed, little one," replied the old man, slowly. "I am Winter, and I came this evening to make my entrance in the school before going through the streets and other dwellings."

As he spoke his icy breath reached me and chilled me. I paid no attention to it; and calling to mind the prayer I had said before sleeping for the unfortunate, I joined my trembling hands and said to him:

"Oh! as you are here, *Lord Winter*, let me plead with you, not for us who have warm clothing and fires in our class-rooms, but for those who want for every thing. *Lord Winter*, do not be too severe.

"Hear not those who ask a great deal of snow, in order to display their handsome furs.

"Hear not those who ask for a sharp and biting atmosphere, simply with the vain desire of seeing large fires burning on their hearths, and of giving brilliant soirées.

"Think of the garrets without fire, where a poor widow courageously works night and day.

"Think of the bed, destitute of covering, where a poor, sick old man shivers with cold.

"Think of the poor consumptives, with their weary cough, to whom the cold does so much harm.

"Spare the little children in the street, singing their little songs, and holding out hands red and swollen with the frost.

"Spare also the good God's little birds who die of cold."

The old man smilingly replied :

"Alas ! alas ! child ; my route is traced, and my mission fixed in advance. The grain of wheat waits my coming to ripen in the earth, which I cover with snow ; the tree calls me to destroy the insects which in the spring would destroy its roots ; the atmosphere itself asks that I should purify it from the miasmas of summer ; and it is to repair the involuntary evil caused by my passage that I have come to you."

And his stiff hand drew aside the curtain of the future, and I saw a profusion of brilliant things—books, toys, bonbons—above which I read these words : *Christmas presents for the poor.*

But the clock struck, and I awoke with a start, and my first thought was, *Yes, yes ; I will share my Christmas presents with the poor and the sick.*

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A charity of which few people think is the *alms of happiness.*

What sweeter enjoyment than to *confer a little happiness* upon those who are near us?

What occupation easier or more amiable than to endeavor to make those around us happy?

Happiness is one of those gifts which one can bestow without being conscious that he possesses it himself. Each one has in the depths of his heart something like a *provision* in reserve. . . . We cannot always know how to make use of it for ourselves. We can always give it to others, and by such alms-giving with pure intentions—oh, *how easily* we are saved! Has not God promised to render unto us all that we do for others?

The *little coin of happiness* which even the poorest possesses, and with which we can incessantly give alms, is *graciousness* in receiving a request, a visit, or an annoyance.

It is the *habitual smile* which naturally escapes from the lips, and sympathetically produces a smile on the lips of others.

It is a *service* graciously rendered, sometimes simply asked.

It is a *sincere acknowledgment* of services in simple words; it is a word of *approbation*, given in an affectionate tone, to one who has labored near us and with us.

Oh, it is so little, so very little, all this! Do not refuse it; God will return it to you.

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A good thought propagated is an *angel* who goes, in the name and to the profit of him who sends it, to do good everywhere it has the mission to penetrate.

You wish to accomplish some *works of mercy*, which are so sweet to the soul and so meritorious for heaven—to *give alms*, for example. . . . But you are poor; *send a good thought* which will simply tell of the *happiness of giving*, and, guided by Providence, it will penetrate to the soul of some person, who, being moved, will give largely of his abundance, and the good God will have two people to reward—*the one who gave and the one who inspired the alms.*

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You would like to visit the prisoners and the sick, to console those who weep, to *speak of the good God* to little children who do not know Him, . . . but your duty keeps you within the narrow precincts of a cell, a room, or a family; *send a good thought* which will tell of God's goodness, which will speak of the happiness and the merit of suffering, which will show how in a few days it is followed by the

sweet repose of Paradise, . . . and this thought will give birth to hope, a smile, an act of love, . . . and God will be indebted to you for a soul that perhaps had forgotten Him.

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Good advice is more precious than gold ; a tender word, a tear, a prayer is more precious than *good advice.*

THE BIRD CHARMER.

He was an old man with a gentle, kind face, a calm expression, and a restful smile.

Little birds flew about him flapping their wings and giving little joyous chirps.

They came and went, lighting upon the old man's head, then upon his shoulder, or upon the ground at his feet to take the crumbs he was scattering for them ; others bolder than the rest lit upon his hand and fed from his fingers.

And you could see that the good old man was happy in their confidence, happier still perhaps to do good.

A child, marvelling at the tameness of the birds, said to her mother :

" But what does he give to attract them ? "

" Only bread."

" Bread! Oh, I 'll give them cake ; how they will flock about me! "

And drawing quite near the charmer the child began to scatter crumbs of cake, beckoning to the birds and calling, "Birdie, little birdie!"

The timid birds took flight.

The disappointed little one followed them with her eyes, murmuring: "*Yet I gave them cake.*"

"My child," the old man said gently, "to win birds, to win hearts to us, it is not sufficient to *give them good things; we must give in a way which will please them.*"

Is not this a lesson for us at the beginning of a new year of *Golden Sands?*

It is not merely for diversion, nor even for the sweet and at the same time allowable pleasure of finding them looked for and welcomed, that we publish these *little leaves.* We have a mission to fulfil, and, to fulfil this mission, oh that we were *charmers to attract hearts, to attract souls, that we might bring them to Thee, my God!*

THEY SAY.

There are two words *so short* that they are uttered before reflection has time to repress them.

So light that they flutter from mouth to mouth, without our even knowing from whose lips they came.

So powerful that they justify slander, authorize

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calumny, reassure the most timorous consciences, and circulate without contradiction the gosssip which destroys reputations and prepares the ruin and despair of families.

So wicked that they rob youth of its joys, old age of its dignity and repose, loving hearts of their frank confidence, and nearly every one of a portion of his happiness.

So loved that they find access to every house. No reunion is without them ; they are found, indeed, in places from which it would seem their wickedness should exclude them.

So sprightly that they animate conversation, develop the most obtuse intelligence, furnish subjects of interminable gossip to the most taciturn persons.

They are called : " They say."

"*They say*" serves as a mask to a family spectre, to those phantoms which formerly came in the night to trouble the sleep and suck the blood of their victims.

It is not *blood* that he sucks, this monster hidden under these two words, "*they say*" ; it is *honor*.

Let it present itself under its true form : *Such a one did such a thing*. . . . It will be repulsed by every honest person, and, if it be told at all, it will be in secret lest a proof of the calumny be demanded.

But why should it hide itself under this mask, "*they say*"?

Who is responsible? Is it the first person who made the fatal revelation? No one knows him.

Could we not exorcise this terrible and indefatigable demon?

We could, if falsehood, malice, hatred, and the petty ranklings of vanity were replaced in the human heart by truth, justice, kindness, and love of our neighbor. . . .

But, alas! this happy time will never come, and to the end of the world the demon of slander and calumny will reign under its perfidious mask, "*they say*."

What we can do is never to receive it.

Come together, honest, loyal hearts, and resolve:

1. Never to utter these hypocritical words, "*they say*," hiding as they do perhaps the dishonor of a family.

2. To stop from the first the person who pronounces them, asking simply, Who is this mysterious personage, *They?*

3. Never to believe what reaches you through this messenger, "*they say*," who makes a profession of lying, while laughing to himself at the credulous dupes of his falsehoods.

But. . . .

Still another of those wicked little words which fall on the reputation like a drop of corrosive poison on a delicate face—which penetrate and hide themselves in the soul, like a thorn or a steel point burying itself in the flesh.

We have branded that other expression, *they say* —*they say*, that sovereign of the world despised everywhere, and everywhere listened to, that messenger of false news, that scourer of the highway, that peddler of gossip, that *destroyer* of friendships.

But is more hypocritical, and consequently more treacherous.

But does more evil, because it says less : it leaves you to suspect more, for it only shows itself sweetly after a compliment.

But is the contradiction which irritates and destroys all harmony.

But is the opposition which raises the storm.

But is the suspicion which begets distrust.

But is the icy breath which cools affection and arrests devotion.

They say, no doubt, is sometimes uttered maliciously ; but it most frequently springs from heedlessness and thoughtlessness.

But is the servant of *jealousy*. Listen : " That person has real merit, but " . . .

Of *cavilling :* "You are right, *but*" . . .

Of *spitefulness :* "That person would succeed, *but* . . . She would be an excellent friend, *but*" . . .

Of *laziness and selfishness :* "I would like to be of service to you, *but*" . . .

Of *hypocrisy :* "She is more clever than I, even more intelligent, *but*" . . .

Oh! when will we be *frank*, saying of what is good, *it is good ;* of what is beautiful, *it is beautiful*, without adding any modification ?

When will we possess a *liberal mind*, looking *fairly* at the good and beautiful before us, without seeking by sidelong glances to discover a crooked line, coloring a little too deep, a slightly inharmonious sentence ?

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Why should you suspect evil intentions against you ? Do you not know the thought disturbs you and creates an evil disposition ?

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Restrain that mocking smile about to show itself upon your lips ; it will pain him who is the occasion of it. Why give pain to others ?

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A QUARTER OF AN HOUR BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

JESUS.

My child, it is not necessary "to know much" in order to please me; it suffices "that you love me much."

Speak to me as you would to your mother, if she were here and pressed you to her heart. Is there no one you wish to recommend to me? Tell me the names of your relations, your friends; after each name add what you would like to have me do for them. . . . Ask a great deal. I love generous hearts who forget themselves for others.

Speak to me of the poor whom you would comfort, of the sick you have seen suffer, of the erring ones you would convert, of the persons who are estranged from you and whose affection you wish to regain. For all say a fervent prayer. Remind me that I have promised to hear every prayer that comes from the heart; and are not prayers heart-felt which we say for those we love and who love us?

* * *

"Have you no graces to ask for yourself?" Write, if you wish, a long list of your desires, of the wants of your soul, and come and read it to me.

Tell me with simplicity how self-indulgent you are,

how proud, how irritable, how selfish, how cowardly, how lazy, . . . and ask me to come to your aid in the efforts which you are making. Poor child, do not blush : there are many saints in heaven who had your faults, but they prayed to me, and little by little they corrected them.

Hesitate no less to ask me for the gifts of body and mind—"health, memory, success." . . . I can grant every thing, and I always give when the favors asked will render souls more holy. To-day what do you wish, my child? If you knew how desirous I am to do you good!

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Have you no plans which occupy you? Tell them to me in detail. Is it something about your vocation? Of what are you thinking? What do you wish? Is it a pleasure you have in store for your mother, your family, or those upon whom you are dependent? What do you wish to do for them?

And for me—have you no thoughts of zeal, or do you not wish to effect a little good in the souls of your friends, those who love you, and perhaps are forgetful of me? Tell me all that interests you. What is the motive which influences you? what are the means you wish to employ?

Make known to me your failures; I will show you

the cause of them. . . . Whom do you wish to interest in your work? I am the master of hearts, my child, and I lead them gently where I will. . . . I will give you all that you need ; be at rest.

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Have you annoyances? O my child, relate them to me minutely! Who has given you pain? Who has wounded your self-love? Who has treated you with contempt? Tell me *all*, and you will end by adding that you forgive and forget, . . . and I will bless you! . . .

Do you fear some trial?

Is there in your soul a vague fear which, though unreasonable, torments you? Confide fully in my Providence. . . . I am with you, I see all, I will not abandon you.

Are there hearts about you less kind than heretofore, or who, through indifference or neglect, are estranged from you, though you are unconscious of having done any thing to wound them? . . . Pray to me for them, and I will restore them to you, if they are useful to your sanctification.

Have you no happiness to make known to me? Why not make me a sharer in your joys? Tell me all that has come to you since yesterday—to console you, to gladden you, to bring you joy. Was it an

unexpected visit which did you good, a fear which was suddenly dissipated, a success which you were fearful of failing to obtain, a mark of affection, a letter, a *souvenir* which you have received, a trial that left you stronger than you supposed? . . . It was I, my child, who sent you all this. Why do you not prove yourself grateful, saying frequently: *I thank thee?* Gratitude draws more favors, and the Benefactor loves to be reminded of his bounty.

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Have you no promises to make to me? You know I read the depths of your heart. Men may be deceived, but God never; be, then, sincere. . . . Are you resolved to no longer expose yourself to the occasion of sin? to deprive yourself of that object which does you harm? to read no longer books which excite your imagination? to withdraw your friendship from that person who is not pious, and whose presence disturbs the peace of your soul? Will you immediately be kind to that companion who has wounded you? . . . Well, my child, . . . go now, resume your daily labors; be silent, modest, resigned, charitable; love the Blessed Virgin, and return to-morrow with a heart still more devoted and loving, and I will have new favors for you.

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Do you remember that old story of a young man with bent head standing on the border of a vast piece of ground which he had to cultivate, discouraged and murmuring : " I can never do it ; it is too large " ?

" My son," said his father, " you have not *all this field* to plough. Do you see this little corner marked by a slight ridge ? That is all your task of to-day ; only occupy yourself with that."

Let us apply these wise words to the hours which divide our day, and which are so many distinct portions of *land* that we have to plough, and sow, and with the harvest purchase heaven.

Why look in the morning at this long work of an entire day, which we perhaps will not accomplish, and which our imagination peoples with difficulties ? Let us only look at this little space which God limits by a *half hour*, and let us only think of sowing well this little *corner*.

Is it too much ? Let us limit ourselves still more, and live a *quarter of an hour* at a time.

Who, then, can fail to accomplish perfectly for *one quarter of an hour* the duty which is prescribed him ? to bear *for one quarter of an hour* the troubles which God sends us drop by drop ? to be patient, to pray fervently, to work with constancy *for one quarter of an hour* ?

Each minute is like the mesh which in the evening must form a cloth woven of the thousand-and-one duties of the day : "prayer, labor, repose, devotion, patience." . . .

One mesh is certainly little, very little, in a web, but the web is only beautiful because each mesh is well done.

And if you, the good God's workman, let one *fall* through indifference—if through spite you make *another crooked* ; if through vanity you *weave* a third other than the Master orders—what confusion when evening comes, and God, surveying minute by minute "your unfolded day," will see there "vacant spaces, defects," alas ! perhaps "culpable designs."

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In order that life may be good and pleasant, *occupation* should surround and enter it, as the air surrounds and penetrates the body.

To be without some *useful occupation* which, outside our great duties, will fill all those little moments when we are alone, is to slowly plant within ourselves the seed of a discontent which will end by destroying our cheerfulness, weakening our virtue, and embittering our character.

It would seem that a person who has noble thoughts, who says nothing ungracious, who is assiduous in her hours of work, and faithful to the

demands of her position, needed nothing more to make her life good and useful. But no; her life with all this is not sufficiently useful, nor consequently meritorious, if, outside these duties, when she is alone she permits her mind and heart to drift aimlessly, because then her life is filled with *little voids*.

And through these moments of dreamy *idleness* there will come and go "troubles about nothing, dark clouds, little suspicions, sudden silences, sharp words, prolonged weariness, and sullenness without cause."

Mothers, friends, who wish to be always loved, find always a new and interesting occupation for those to whom you devote yourselves.

And you who wish to remain always joyous, pure, and loving, impose upon yourself each day *some task*; something *definite*, that you may not have the trouble of seeking it; something *simple*, that you can leave and resume without trouble; something *interesting*, which will attract you when your serious occupations are over, retain you by its charm, and fill the voids in your day; "for instance, a collection to complete, a book to look over, something to acquire, a work of art to perfect." . . .

God has given to *occupation* the mission of the north wind—that of purifying the miasma of the

heart, as the wind purifies the miasma of the atmosphere.

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Only have patience to wait, and perseverance that you may not grow weary.

Even for God the conversion of a soul, in one sense, is not an easy thing.

It is because she does not know how to "wait" that the pious woman is often exacting toward the soul which she wishes to reclaim. "The more we hasten," says a wise man, "the less progress we make"; the more we exact, the more we expose ourselves to a refusal. Men like to move unrestrainedly and have the merit of their virtues.

It is because she does not know how to "persevere" that the work always seems to be begun anew.

Courage, then! The ground is very difficult to cultivate, but each prayer let fall is like a drop of dew. The marble is very hard, but each prayer is a blow of the chisel which gradually shapes it.

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THE SEEKER OF EXCUSES FOR OTHERS.

What a useful and delightful office is this!

Have you never seen the embarrassment and terror of a child, a servant, a brother, a sister, who

has committed a fault, and who is reprimanded rather sharply, perhaps even a little unjustly?

You who possess a good heart, do not leave them under the weight of reproach and shame.

To great criminals, convicted of crimes, human justice always furnishes a *counsellor*, whose office is to defend them. Assume, then, this mission, so paternal—I would almost say divine.

To mitigate a punishment, to shorten a painful separation, can you not plead the frivolity of the age, the thoughtlessness of the character, the ardor of the temperament, the devotion of the past, the affection so many times manifested, the efforts to reform made with such constancy, the sincere tears you have witnessed, the fear which prevented submission? . . .

Ask pardon, insist, promise, guarantee fidelity for the future; . . . and when you see that the heart which had to reprimand is moved, seek the culprit, say to him one of those affectionate words which certainly do not encourage his fault, but tend to renew his courage; speak to him of the pain he has given to those he loves, and bring him back repentant.

I know that it is necessary to *scold* and to *punish*, but those to whom the good God has given this charge are much to be pitied.

You who have it not, excuse, sustain, protect; is it not what Jesus would do in your place?

You need *tact;* your heart will give it to you.

You need *constancy;* prayer will sustain you.

You need *courage*—you to whom it is wanting on almost all occasions; *affection* will strengthen you, and you will be astonished at the boldness you have displayed.

A father of a family once said: "I must hide from my daughter, if I wish to scold any one; she always finds excuses for others."

Oh, if that could be said of you!

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A *dull and wearied man*—and he is nearly always weary who has not some definite occupation—is naturally fretful and easily irritated.

A trifle irritates him. . . . If he is well-bred he shows his irritation quietly and politely, to be sure; but there is a certain agitation on the surface, and you easily perceive that he is disturbed.

Contradictions enrage him, resistance annoys him, silence exasperates him, submission makes him nervous. . . .

Oh! how useful then is *occupation*, which absorbs what is exuberant in life!

There is a danger, perhaps, that this absorbing occupation may render us *cold and indifferent;* but a very simple means of preventing this sad result is to

impose upon ourselves a labor which has for its end *the happiness and well-being of those we love.*

Oh! how kind this makes us!

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The useful employment of time is, perhaps, one of the most difficult virtues to acquire.

To have well-filled one's day is one of the sweetest joys of the soul.

To know how to be occupied, and never have to ask one's self, *What am I going to do?* is the most useful science for happiness and virtue.

"To commence promptly, to work steadily, to continue with constancy, to interrupt one's work amiably, to resume it calmly, to finish it a little slowly,"—is the surest mark of a strong and virtuous soul.

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All that I retain of a large book that I read was this thought: *Where there is a will there is a way.* This thought in itself is a whole book.

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"Mother," asked a child, "since nothing is lost, where do our thoughts and desires go?"

"Into the memory of God," gravely replied the mother, "and there they remain for ever."

"For ever?" said the child with emotion. . . .

He hung his head, and, drawing close to his mother, murmured : " *I am afraid !* "

Who of us has not uttered the same cry ?

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Do you wish to win back a friend who, after long years of intimacy, has withdrawn from you, irritated by an imprudent word, or a painful suspicion, and who, through fear of finding himself again misjudged, still keeps aloof ? Make an appeal to his heart : say to him simply, *I need you.*

He who will not hasten at this appeal, forgetting all the pain he has endured, can no longer possess a *kind heart :* therefore, think of him no more except to recommend him to God.

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" *Annoyances !* I have had plenty, I assure you, in the year which has just past : but . . .

But what ?

I have not been *annoyed at all !*

Not *at all ?*

No ; I have a Friend who takes upon himself these troubles, and who is never better pleased than when they are confided to Him. I bring Him my annoyance, and expose to Him simply my embarrassment, and under His direction things right themselves.

C.E.WENTWORTH

That is why you are never disturbed?

Why should I be disturbed? I have a habit of never keeping my cares; I bring them to Him according as they come, and He always either dissipates them Himself, or He gives me means of acquiring peace which astonish me.

And this Friend is not for you alone?

He is the Friend of all. He is called *Jesus*, and His dwelling is near by, *in the tabernacle of the altar*."

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Charity appears to give one a great deal of audacity; permit me to profit by it, for the purpose of making you a domiciliary visit.

It is not your rich apartments that I wish to examine, nor this magnificent furniture, nor this fine linen, so complete and in such good order, which you would show me with so much satisfaction.

No, it is your *garret* I wish to visit; your lumber-room, which you perhaps have not entered for more than ten years, always contenting yourself with simply saying to a servant, *Put that aside.* That is where I wish to enter.

Only see what an accumulation of things:

This furniture worn by time, falling apart from old age, and buried dust.

These old-fashioned garments which the insects

are silently devouring in the bottom of that dilapidated closet.

And these bed-clothes, and shreds of mattresses, and the remains of that faded carpet, and those kitchen utensils out of use. . . .

What do you do with all these? . . . Sell them? No, certainly not; you would not dare, you would make so little profit by them. Are you still going to keep them? But what good are they? Listen: do as if you were moving; we do not then find that we have too many encumbrances? Carry them to that *monte-de-biété* of the good God which we call *the house of the poor*, where you may be sure they will give you more than *three per cent.*

And do you know what will be done in these *houses of the poor* with your encumbrances?

That old arm-chair, by the aid of a few francs recovered and made strong, will serve as a bed for an infirm old man to rest on.

These pieces of furniture, repaired a little, will make a whole family happy.

These worn garments and these linen rags, which, coming from you, can still be mended, will form the beginning of a wardrobe in a young household.

That old tapestry will become a cover-lid. . . .

And that which cannot be made *useful* may be sold to procure some sweets for the little children, and brighten a few hours of their winter.

You do not imagine the joy one feels in depriving himself of a material object—a garment, for example—that it may serve for some poor person.

It is like a *tie* between this poor person and ourselves which makes us a sharer in all his prayers and in all his merits. It seems as though God cannot think of him without thinking of us, and as though He could not love him without loving us.

Then God always puts in the heart some little joy in place of the material object of which we deprive ourselves for the poor.

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RECIPE FOR BECOMING AMIABLE.

To be amiable is to possess a *charm* which *draws* to us the hearts of others, and a *tie* which binds these hearts to ours.

This gives birth to *friendship*—that sweet virtue which unites the strength of two souls, making them more courageous, more constant, less sensitive to contradictions, and more active in seeking and practising virtue.

WHAT IS AMIABILITY?

Is it beauty? No; a person who is *only pretty* would be attractive certainly, but . . . for a short time; and however faint may be the indication, yet

when I discover under this charming exterior a cold heart, a false spirit, an irritable or vain soul, I am repelled. Something else is necessary to attach the heart.

Is it an elegant toilet? No; though it may charm the eye, if it be fresh, simple, and in good taste, yet if I perceive merely a desire to please for the sake of winning flattery and praise, the charm does not last. Something else is necessary to attach the heart.

Is it science? No; if it exist alone, and above all in a proud, pedantic, or disdainful mind, it repels instead of attracting me, . . . compelling me to feel ashamed of my own ignorance. Something more than science is necessary to attach the heart.

Is it virtue in general? No, particularly if it has not learned, as St. Paul recommends, to *make itself all things to all men.*

Of course without virtue it is impossible, for any *length of time, to be perfectly amiable;* but we must not conclude from this that virtue, under whatever form it presents itself, is amiable.

If the person with whom I live makes me say every instant: "Do not be so harsh, have a little more compassion in your heart; be more gentle, more tolerant for my poor faults, which I try hard to correct, but which are always rebelling; do not be so

sharp in discovering what I do wrong, and do not make me feel that I am less virtuous than you," she would never attract me to her or to the good God. Something else is necessary to attach my heart.

This is the *amiable person* whom I wish to resemble :

She seeks to divine my tastes, my intentions, my desires, my repugnances, and *in a measure identify herself with me.*

If I am unreasonable, she smiles sweetly and calmly, waits a second thought, which is always modified under her sweet influence.

She never speaks brusquely to me, her tone is never imperious, her words never wound, her reply is never sharp.

She never directly contradicts me, and never by a mocking smile gives me to understand that I have said something foolish or committed a blunder.

She seeks to please me by her devotion in actions more than in words ; she repairs, without my knowledge, the consequences of my negligence and want of thought.

She makes order everywhere ; she is to all that surrounds me what spring is to nature ; she is to my heart what perfume and bright sunshine are to my senses.

She bears with me without letting me know it ;

she makes me believe, not that *I am perfect*, but that *I am becoming* so. . . .

How can I help loving such a person? Not only does she enrich my existence, but she improves my character, forms my heart, and aids the divine grace in sanctifying my life.

And if in the depth of my soul, I try to discover in what her amiability consists, I find:

"Kindness, which makes her thoughtful for others";

"Love of duty, which makes her devoted";

"Piety, which sustains and gives her tact";

"The charity of Jesus Christ, which tells her to love always."

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Do you wish that work should never weary you? Think that you are giving pleasure to another.

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AN EASY METHOD OF ACCUMULATING RICHES, PUT WITHIN THE REACH OF EVERY ONE.

A very small book was given me the other day, and it bore the title which I have just written, and you can imagine how I hastened to read it! To become rich!—who has not dreamed of such a happiness many times in his life?

There were charming things in this pamphlet. See for yourself.

Spend a cent less than your net income, and you will always be rich.

Have a little box, carefully closed, and oblige yourself every day to put in it a piece of money, as small as you like. You will see at the end of the year what a treasure will be there. Money attracts money, and the more we amass, the more we wish to amass.

To spend indiscreetly five cents a day is to throw twenty dollars a year out of the window; it is wasting a sum which after ten years would have procured many enjoyments.

Put off till to-morrow the purchase of an object that you wish to-day. . . . To-morrow, perhaps, you will find it rather unnecessary; then put aside the money you would have spent, and you will see at the end of the year what a fabulous sum you have economized. . . .

Now this reading set me reflecting, and, God aiding, my thought mounted quietly to heaven, and, while it ascended, my good angel murmured in my ear some words of Holy Scripture which echoed in my heart like harmony:

Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume. If you

have much, give much; if you have little, give this little with a good heart. You will thus amass a great treasure for your days of distress. He who gives to the poor shall never know want. Give alms . . . and God will return it to you.

And encouraged by these thoughts, I quietly took a dollar bill, and I said to myself: "Let us deposit it . . . in heaven."

And I wrote in my account-book, "Deposited in the bank of . . ." and I put some marks, the meaning of which was only known to God and me.

Interest will be paid me; of that I am sure. . . . In the meantime I never see that entry in my account-book without feeling a thrill of joy and hearing a voice say softly in my ear, "God is thy debtor."

One good thought generously received always attracts another.

Thus this deposit was scarcely made when the same harmonious voice continued:

"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

"Give, and it will be given unto you."

"With what measure you mete, it shall be measured unto you again."

And my angel guardian showed me another investment still *easier* than the first; more *lucrative*,

since it can be made every instant; more *in the reach* of everybody, since it needs no pecuniary resources.

And he said to me, Every kind or obliging act towards your neighbor, placed by a direct and pure intention in the heart of God, will multiply and yield you a large interest.

Thus, give a good advice—God will give you a good thought.

You bear the annoyance of a contradiction, of a visit—God will bear with you and willingly remain near you.

You seek to be useful, to give pleasure—God will seek, and certainly find, an occasion of giving you happiness.

You hide the faults of another; you excuse him—God will hide your faults and permit you to be esteemed. You refrain from taking revenge by making your superiority felt—God, who *owes* you a chastisement, will forget your fault.

You willingly inconvenience yourself to render a service—God will procure you a multitude of little pleasures to which you had no right.

Oh! how can we really neglect such easy means of becoming rich—*rich in happiness?*

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Let us not count too much what we do for others,

or try to measure the extent of our devotion; the calculation casts a *coolness* into the soul, and this *coolness* communicates itself to all our actions.

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In point of virtue, "that which costs nothing is worth nothing."

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To listen kindly is often an act of the most delicate interior mortification, and helps us very much to speak kindly ourselves.

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He whom *nothing pleases pleases no one.*

LITTLE OFFICES.

THE REPAIRER OF NEGLECTS.

Even persons of the most generous disposition and quick perception, in the midst of the incessant occupations of a family, will often forget a number of those minute details, insignificant in themselves, but the privation of which to certain temperaments is a real cross. The details of family life are like the little *pegs* which hold the different parts of a piece of furniture together; withdraw one, two, . . . the piece of furniture no longer has any grace; it becomes disjointed.

So it is in a family; its harmony is sometimes only

due to the care taken not to neglect one of those *insignificant nothings* of politeness, punctuality, or habit to which we should give almost as much attention as we bestow on greater duties.

Each member of a family, particularly if he be advanced in years, has his little oddities, to which he attaches a sort of happiness.

It is a garment arranged in such a fashion.

It is a newspaper bought at such an hour.

It is a lamp put in such a spot.

It is a game played in such a place.

It is a visit expected at such a moment.

It is the expression of congratulations at such a time.

It is a desire scarcely manifested, but often experienced. . . .

Watch all these little things. Take upon yourself to visit every morning the *corners* where they love to find every thing that is useful for the day. Go first to the apartment where they all assemble; remove every thing which would displease them; complete all the arrangements which have been carelessly made.

But do all this without noise, without parade. . . . Enjoy alone the happiness it gives you.

Oh! how the good God will return it to you in heaven!

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"God is there; He can do all. He loves me; why should I fear?"

Delightful thought!

Summed up in these few words, so easy to repeat: "*God knows it, and He loves me.*" Oh! what strength, what joy, what consolation they bring to my soul!

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Thoughtlessly, but without any bad intention, I committed an act which, wrongly interpreted, may affect my reputation and hinder the good which I ought to do. I fear the consequences; *God knows it, and he loves me.* If I confide myself to Him, will He permit that I should be no longer useful? Can He not hide what I have done—make it forgotten by those who know it?

I am sick, and my malady becomes serious and leads me to fear insupportable suffering; *God knows it, and He loves me.* Will he send me suffering above my strength? Oh! no, no; I am sure that if He sends me suffering it is because I need it, and that He will measure my strength with the prudence of a mother who metes out to her child a painful remedy.

They speak evil of me: *God knows it, and He loves me.* Will He not make the calumny a means of sanctification for my soul? What is

necessary that a drop of poison should become salutary? That it should be given by a skilful hand and under favorable circumstances. Does not God *know how to administer it?*

I am growing poor. I see my little fortune disappearing; my health is declining. I am growing weak; I am afraid of being a burden, of being abandoned. *God knows it, and He loves me.* Will He let me want for any thing? Will He not always leave near me at least one heart which will understand mine?

God knows it, and He loves me! Oh! the marvellous power of these words! They adapt themselves to every circumstance in life and to every situation of the soul. All that is necessary that they should produce their effect is that we should "watch over the purity of our souls and our union with God."

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Not many days since there went to heaven the soul of one who was little known on earth, but whose actions through life left a sweet odor like the perfume of flowers. Each morning, in her prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, she made this simple resolution:

To-day I will give pleasure to all those whom the good God sends about me.

This was her occupation of the day, "and never," she relates, "did the care of giving pleasure to another retard me in my daily duties."

Oh! who can tell all the acts of charity, of self-denial, of renouncement, of patience, which she must have practised in order to keep her gracious resolution?

My God, the flowers, in dying, leave a fruitful seed; has not this soul left one survivor who will continue "her work of happiness?"

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"One of the most important duties here below consists in *being charming*.

"And the great mission of woman particularly consists in making virtues flourish by cultivating happiness."

Then sow joy in souls, you who wish to see virtues grow.

First make those *happy* whom you love and wish to make *holy*, and whom you fear you may not meet in heaven. Nothing prepares the soul for the grace of God like happiness. God reserves to Himself alone the right to convert by *suffering and misfortune*.

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"Did you observe," said a servant to his master, a good village curate—"did you observe the attitude

of that man in church, the weary manner of such a one, the inattention of . . .?"

"Yes, yes, I observed it," interrupted the pious priest, with a calm smile, "and I tried to be more fervent than usual to-day, in order that the good God, attentive to my prayer, would perceive less the faults of those poor children."

Behold what kind hearts do at sight of their neighbors' failings!

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St. Aloysius de Gonzaga, as he was about to assist at an instruction which he had desired very much to hear, was summoned to a visitor whom they represented as importunate and counselled him to avoid.

"No," he replied; "I was going to the sermon to learn *how to conquer myself*. Here I have an opportunity of immediately practising that virtue."

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Of what are you thinking? was asked a savant who, on his death-bed, had become reconciled to God.

I am thinking, he replied with emotion, that *hell is full of talent, and heaven of virtue.*

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Do you wish to hear something very touching which you will not find in your books?

Listen to what is related by a simple herdsman :

" I do not know who it was said to me one day : Jean Baptiste, thou art very poor. That is true. If thou wert to fall sick, thou wouldst be, with thy wife and children, without resources. That is true, and I felt anxious the rest of the day.

" In the evening at the *Angelus* my reflections became wiser, and I said to myself : Jean Baptiste, behold, thirty odd years that thou art upon the earth thou hast never possessed any thing, and nevertheless thou dost live ; thou hast found each day nourishment, and each night repose. In point of *trouble*, God has never sent thee more than thy measure ; in point of *succor*, what was necessary thou hast never wanted. . . . Who has given thee all this ?

" It is God !

" Jean Baptiste, be no longer ungrateful, and banish anxiety ; for what can induce thee to think that when thou art old, when thou hast more wants, the Hand from which thou hast received so much will be closed ? I said my prayers, and my anxiety was at an end for ever."

THY WILL BE DONE.

These words are a sweet refuge prepared for us by the good God in the midst of this arid and weary desert which we call *life*.

They express the act of the child who lovingly casts himself into his father's arms to await the passage of the storm.

The act of the poor abandoned one who, after long years of a sad and solitary life, finds again his mother and cries to her, *Give me rest! Give me rest!*

The act of the exile who returns to the home of his first youth, and, beholding with emotion all that he has loved, can only repeat, *Here I wish to die!*

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, heart-broken by suffering and struggle, or still more cruelly torn by separation, and they will be to you a healing balm.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, heart saddened by solitude and crushed by neglect, and they will be for you a consoling friend, a sustaining support, a loving heart which will remain always with you.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, timid and anxious heart, uncertain of the path to follow, and knowing no longer of whom to seek counsel; and they will be

to you a light which will guide you in the way to heaven.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, loving heart who would save your dear ones from the fear which troubles them, or the misfortune which threatens them; in these words they will find a secure shelter, and the storm will pass without harming them.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words with every breath, with every pulsation of your heart, with every movement of your lips. God will always understand them *as you intend them:* sometimes as a *prayer*, as an *act of resignation*, as an act of *faith* in time of trouble, as an act of hope in time of fear—always as an *act of love!*

THY WILL BE DONE.

To Thee alone, O my God, can these words be addressed, for to Thee alone can we confide and abandon ourselves completely.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Yes, then, my God, Thy will be done! Thy will be done! I say it from the depths of my soul; and into the abyss of these supreme words I cast myself—my body, my soul, my whole being, and all

that I love here below! *Thy will be done! Thy will be done!*

THE SOUL TO JESUS CHRIST AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN.

O Jesus! it is Thou who sayest to me, *Call Me thy Father!* My Father! Oh! what consolation in this name!

My Father! I feel, at this hour particularly, that I am not alone on earth, and that, whatever may come to me this day, I am sure of being guarded, protected, consoled, loved! . . .

Jesus! let me taste the happiness which this sweet word *Father* brings me. Oh! I need not to raise my eyes to heaven to feel it. . . . Thou art in my heart, and is it not heaven where Thou art? Yes, yes, my heart at this hour is heaven—heaven with its joy, with its peace, with its love—and if I preserve myself innocent to-day, my day will be a day of heaven, . . . happier in one sense, because it will be given to me to *suffer* something for thee.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

To sanctify thy name, O my God! is *to pronounce it with respect.*

I wish, then, to-day to recite my prayers more slowly, to make the sign of the cross particularly

with more piety. I wish every day to see Thee near me as now, listening to me with kindness, and looking upon me with affection ; my heart will be like a sanctuary, in which I will permit nothing to enter which can displease Thee.

To sanctify Thy name is *to pronounce it more frequently*. I wish every hour, at least, to have it on my lips. I wish particularly, whenever I may have an important action to perform or a difficulty to conquer, to murmur devoutly this invocation, which contains in itself the art of living well: *Jesus, meek and humble of heart, have mercy on me.*

THY KINGDOM COME.

Jesus, present in my heart, Thou art in Thy kingdom ; reign, reign there completely, sovereignly. Tell me, O my King, what Thou requirest of me today? Thy commandments, my rule of life, my ordinary duties, behold! *Thy direct orders*, I will not violate them, I promise Thee ; moreover, I will regard all those in authority over me as Thy *ministers*, commanding me in Thy name, and in Thy name I will obey them. What matters the tone, or the inopportuneness, or the rudeness of the command?

What matters the inconvenience which an unexpected order will cause me? It is Thy voice ; I will hear Thee, Jesus, whom I will obey always in all things.

Again, Thy kingdom *is the heart of others*, and there also I will cause Thee to reign.

Then to whom, O my God, can I speak of Thee to-day? What counsels can I give? What moments can I choose when, without wounding any one or making a display of indiscreet zeal, I may be permitted to say a few words of piety?

O my God! give me an opportunity to make Thee loved.

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

Yes, yes, may it be done—Thy holy, adorable, most loving will.

What wilt Thou send me to-day? Humiliations? contradictions? physical sufferings? painful intelligence which I do not expect? an aching heart? a failure? Will I see myself misjudged, wrongly suspected, despised? All that Thou wishest, O my God, I accept it in advance, and if I weep through weakness, oh! regard it not; if I murmur, check me; if I am fretful, punish me; if I am discouraged, raise me up.

Yes, yes, may it be done—Thy holy, adorable, most loving will!

And, moreover, O my God! if it be necessary for Thy glory that I should be humbled, that I should suffer, become useless, be abandoned, Thy will be done, Thy will be done. O my Father, I am wholly Thine!

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

How happy I am, O Jesus! to depend upon Thee. . . . Behold me; it is I, Thy child, who holds forth her hand to Thee.

Give me the *bread of the body* which is necessary for me—clothes, nourishment, shelter—but, my God, do not give me . . . too much of any thing, and grant me the grace to share to-day, by alms, with those who are poorer than I.

Give me the *bread of the mind*, and grant me to-day to hear or read one of those good words which elevate the soul and give wings to the thoughts.

Give me the *bread of the heart*, O my Father! that I may feel for one moment—one short moment—that I love Thee and that Thou lovest me; grant me to devote myself for another.

Give me the *bread of the soul*—the Holy Eucharist. O Jesus! I have just received Thee; may I receive Thee soon again? . . . Will it be to-morrow, O Jesus?

And these graces, grant them to all those I love and who love me; to . . . to . . . to . . .

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.

When I pronounce the word *forgive*, it seems to relieve my heart.

I not only wish to banish hatred from my heart, but to efface every *painful recollection.* O my God! what happiness if Thou must forgive me as I forgive! Thou seest that I wish harm to no one, that I forgive all. . . .

They have offended me *by words*—I forget it; by *actions*—I forget it; by *omissions*—I forget it; by *thoughts*, by *desires*—I forget it. Oh! I also have offended Thee in all these ways. O my God! is it not true that Thou forgettest all, as I forget? I will be very merciful, that Thou mayest have mercy on me.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

In leaving thy altar I am going to encounter temptations. O my God! be with me; say to me always, There is danger there.

May I never *seek* the occasion of offending Thee! If I should seek it through weakness or impulse, may I never find it; if I should find it, may I never yield; and if I should yield, O my God! hasten to raise me up, and may I seek to confess my fault as soon as possible. Sin!—this is the evil above all that I especially beg to be delivered from. Other troubles which may come to me are only trials or expiations; I wish them because it is Thy will. But sin—no, no, I do not wish it, O my God! and even at

the moment when, through weakness, I may be on the point of committing it, hear this cry which I now send forth with so much sincerity : I do not wish it, I do not wish it.

I go, O Jesus! I leave Thy altar, but I have Thee with me. Together let us work, let us pray, let us suffer, let us devote ourselves!

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At this hour when I feel alone, depressed, and discouraged, when every one seems to abandon me, and with reason . . . *there is one heart which loves me*, and which loves me dearly : I know it, I am sure of it. It is Thy Heart, O Jesus! . . . and at this thought I could not but smile, even in the midst of tears.

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Sink not, my poor heart! This failure which so deeply humiliates you ; that sharp word which has just been addressed to you ; that disdainful glance which you detected ; that ingratitude which paralyzes your devotion ; that unhappy fault which creates such an unfavorable impression of you, . . . all these the fatherly hand of God has made to softly penetrate you as a *remedy* for a hidden evil which you saw not. Endure, wait, and submit.

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THE ANGELS OF THE HEARTH.

THE ANGEL OF RESIGNATION.

For a long time men have gone very far in search of happiness.

They take so much trouble to find it, when it is only necessary simply to open our hearts to it and remove the obstacles which prevent it from coming to us.

Happiness is always within our reach.

The most frequent obstacle to its entering the heart is a contrary spirit.

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A contrary spirit, that thorny bush which grows in every path, under the most serene sky, in the most hidden corners of family life, and every moment makes its thorns felt.

And how *sharply* they wound!

How *ingenious* they are in finding the tender places!

How *persistent!*—remaining long hours, retiring an instant, then returning to bury themselves anew.

How *skilful* in hiding themselves under a thousand forms, and a thousand different titles: "sorrows, privations, poverty, affected silence, contempt, opposition, neglect, bitter words, unjust reproaches, rivalries!" . . .

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Close beside each thorny cluster, not to destroy but to blunt its cruel points, God has stationed an *angel* with a smile full of kindness.

And if we would make him our friend, he himself would trace for us a path through these thorns, and our life would be pleasant, sweetly calm, and meritorious, and we would wait in labor and peace the blessed hour of deliverance.

This angel is modest, he lives quietly, he dwells everywhere, because everywhere, whether we live *alone* or *surrounded by a family*, he knows that we are in need of him ; he contents himself with teaching those who will hear him a few heavenly *words*, which take from misfortune its anguish, from poverty its sorrow, from contempt its sting, and from contradiction its harshness.

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These words, falling from his lips, and received into the heart, diffuse a mysterious balm which heals its wounds, reassures the sinking soul, and brings a smile even in the midst of tears.

They are very simple ; behold them : *Lord, not my will, but Thine be done.*

There are thousands of ponderous books, written by learned doctors, on the means of attaining happiness, which do not say as much for the peace of the

soul as this simple sentence of the *Our Father*: *Thy will be done.*

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And while his words calm and reassure us, *the Angel of Resignation* diffuses about him a brightness which gradually penetrates the soul, bringing with it that breath of heavenly atmosphere which in human language we call *sweetness.*

Oh! who can tell all the charm to the countenance, the amiability to the manner, the softness to the character, the strength to the will, and the affection to the heart, which this breath of heaven imparts?

The rays of the material sun, which give to the fruit its color, its velvet down, its refreshing juices, and its nourishing substance, can hardly make us understand the power of *sweetness* slowly sinking into the soul through resignation.

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Its first effect is to destroy the existence of *irritation.*

Have you ever spent several hours in a large manufactory, and have you remarked the innumerable parts which go and come, rise and fall, lengthen and contract, . . . and all with an ease and facility, an order and silence, which are marvellous?

And do you know why you never hear or see any

thing discordant? Why each one of these thousand parts follows its own course without clashing, and contributes to the common end without interfering with the general work?

It is that from time to time an intelligent hand pours upon them some drops of *oil.*

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Such is the continual occupation of the *Angel of Resignation.*

The oil which he pours among the different members of the same family, or among the different thoughts which succeed each other in our hearts, is *gentleness.*

And this virtue prevents characters from *clashing*, from *growing angry*, from *rebelling*, either against one another or against events.

Alas! yes, against *events.* There, perhaps, sweetness is more necessary than in our intercourse with men; we can fly from men, but we cannot escape from events.

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Happy are the souls who, living in friendship with the *Angel of Resignation*, have learned from him to "will what God wills"; to turn from an obstacle rather than waste their strength in crushing it; to yield rather than obstinately persist; to plead

for admission rather than to enter brusquely; to ask rather than command; in fine, to will with all their hearts what they can not prevent.

These souls are *strong* to bear, *pliant* to yield, and above all, *kind* to forget all that has given them pain.

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Look about you, and standing, as it were, upon the fragments of departed years, that your view may be more extended, search for the *happy ones*.

Not those who appear so—parading the pomp of luxury and a clamorous joy—but those whom you will see smile when they are alone, and of whom it is said: "They make every one about them happy."

Approach them and you will hear them murmur softly: Lord, not my will but Thine be done.

The friend who dictated to me these pages on *resignation* had had his share of all this world's happiness—health, riches, glory, a loved family, and the esteem of every one—and all had gone from him like leaves from the trees at the approach of winter.

And as he spoke to me of these trials with a calm smile, which the tears on his cheek could not alter, I asked him how he could still be *happy*. "Ah!" he replied, raising his eyes to heaven, "because I

am not alone; there is near me an *angel*, who has taught me to understand these words which I had not known before: 'All that God does is well done.'"

"And how did you attract this *angel* to you?"

"By prayer."

TO BE SET ASIDE.

It is a sad, a very sad thought!

That it may not crush the heart, filling it with bitterness, it must be meditated before the crucifix.

O Jesus, Jesus! *set aside*, during the long hours of Thy passion, and still so unknown and despised in Thy eucharistic life, let me—let me look upon, and contemplate calmly and quietly, that terrible position which perhaps You reserve for me one day.

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To be set aside is to feel reduced to silence and inaction in a house which was formerly filled with our work—either because our strength has diminished, our mind is less clear, or simply because we have lost the prestige which surrounded us through the kindness of a superior, or the office we filled.

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To be set aside is to see gradually disappearing, day by day, *that prestige* which surrounded us as a soft, sweet halo—that sympathy which brought about

us smiles and kindness ; and to see those we simply called and believed friends gradually withdrawing from us, one by one.

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Oh! what must be the anguish of the poor heart which has preserved its power of devotion and love, and to whom God has sent the hard trial of being *set aside!*

Know you not of such hearts about you, who weep silent tears, and whom, perhaps, through habit, you pass by with indifference?

The *old and the infirm*, chained to the fireside, who doubtless want for nothing in a material sense, but who are never gladdened by the least mark of affectionate tenderness, who are made to retire under the pretext of repose when preparations for a festival are required, and who more than once have believed that they read in the glances of those they have so dearly loved these hard words: *Thou tarryest very long.*

Forsaken ones in families, in communities, who are scarcely spoken to, who are overburdened with labor, who are always found fault with, who never receive a kind word—because they do not please, because they have faults of character which prevent any lasting affection, because they are suspected. . . .

Calumniated ones upon whom God has left all the appearance of evil, and whom men avoid as they would one infected with the plague.

Oh! if there are such about you, go—go sometimes to give them the alms of a glance, a word, or a simple pressure of the hand.

Remain a few moments seated at their side, and to afford them a little joy delicately make them understand that they are *still useful.*

Believe it they have received from God a mission of salvation for those about them.

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And you, poor *forsaken ones*, with scarcely courage to show the wound of your heart, and more frequently with no one to whom you can confide it, look above, raise your tearful eyes to heaven, and send forth that cry which came from a bleeding heart like yours. *O Jesus! Jesus! Thou—Thou dost not set me aside!*

No, dear forsaken ones, God does not *cast you aside;* the more others forsake you, the nearer He draws to you!

Refrain from all complaints. If your heart murmurs: *My trial is hard*, answer: *We need it, my poor heart, since God has sent it to us.*

And in more painful hours, when your sore heart

will cry: *Who now thinks of me?* listen to your angel guardian: *Who thinks of thee, poor soul? God, the Blessed Virgin,* the *angels—all in heaven think of thee always.*

THE SOWER OF PRAYERS.

These simple words are quite a revelation.

To sow prayers about souls in order to *embalm* and preserve them from corruption!

To sow prayers about souls, that they may be purified and opened to the grace of God; who is there so weak, so little gifted, so convinced of uselessness, as to be incapable of filling *this little office* in his family, in the street, near the sick?

Independently of the person who prays, has not prayer in itself a special virtue?

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Courage, then, souls who feel overwhelmed by the weight of your *uselessness.* Sow, sow prayers; this divine seed can never be lost.

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The word *giving* has been ingeniously called by a spiritual writer one of the pivots round which revolves the whole of our divine Christian law.

The Christian, like God, is *expansive*—he loves to share himself; the sinner, like the evil one, is *grasping*—he loves to hoard.

According as we cease to give, we cease to be good Christians ; according as we close our purse or withdraw our good-will, we destroy "our taste for prayer, our fidelity to duty, our love of family, . . ." and close to ourselves a multitude of paths which would have led us to heaven.

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The Christian *makes an occupation* of giving ; we always find him ready to place himself at the disposition of every one, and without trouble, ostentation, or apparent fatigue, and, above all, without permitting his duty to suffer, he renders a thousand little services.

If he cannot give his money to all the poor, he gives to all his *good-will*, which is sometimes harder and more meritorious than to give money.

He gives his *kindness*, forcing himself to dress the wounds of the soul, of the heart, of the reputation, with the same compassion that he would dress the wounds of the body.

He gives his *time*, never refusing to sacrifice an hour of his repose to aid others, even in their pleasures.

He gives *himself*, living continually under the influence of this thought : *To whom can I do good today?*

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You will know the Christian by the facility with which he may be approached, and by the instinct which leads you to address yourself to him rather than another when you are in need of a service.

It is he who, in the street seeing you embarrassed, will come to you at once, and ask simply, What can I do for you?

He who will guide you to the dwelling you are seeking.

He who will yield you the inside of the street, the corner of the carriage, the paper in his hands which you are eager to read.

He who will give you advice in passing, without the air or, above all, the desire of appearing to know more than you.

And he will manifest in all this a tact, a discretion, a pleasure which not only puts you at ease, but makes you desire to *imitate him.*

SUNDAY.

THE RECONCILIATION OF HEARTS.

Each week behold with delight the dawning of Sunday, which the good God calls *His day.*

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To all the days God has given the mission of leading us to eternity by affording us on our way the

portion of joy and sorrow necessary to strengthen and purify us.

But *Sunday* has a mission, all of love.

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I only wish to portray it under the sweet appellation given it by a saint— *The bond of union of hearts.* *Saturday* we throw aside the garments soiled by labor, and *Sunday* we clothe ourselves anew in garments which are not only fresher but more elegant.

Why not make the *toilet* of our hearts as well as the outer toilet of the body?

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The heart during the week has been often soiled and worn by little ranklings, by multiplied vexations, by neglected interest, by hard words. . . .

Well! why not shake off this dust which tarnishes the affection, why not generously pardon each other on *Saturday*, frankly extend your hand and embrace each other, even in the family, then retire in peace, with a contented heart, to await the awakening of the morrow?

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Sunday is *God's truce* for hearts. On this day must be suspended all feelings of resentment, all little animosities. . . . We must clothe our-

selves anew with pardon, forbearance, and amiability.

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Oh! how sweet it is *to renew our love for one another!* Now, each Sunday should bring this obligation.

Do not give coldness and indifference time to grow. . . . They produce *hatred;* and when hatred is once in the heart, how difficult it is to uproot it!

It is a hideous cancer whose invading progress resists all remedies.

It is the poisonous plant which the gardener can never entirely exterminate.

Only a miracle can destroy hatred.

Let us make a fortification to resist the invasion of *indifference* and *misunderstandings*, and each Saturday evening let the father of the family, or he who takes his place, say to all: Children, this evening we forgive and forget, and to-morrow, Sunday, we will recommence life with renewed love for one another.

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